

10AM

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Statement of Harry L. Lichtenbaum, 16 Towne House Lane, Wethersfield, Ct. 06109 (860-563-1231)

My name is Harry Lichtenbaum. I am here to speak against Raised Bill# 6555
commonly known as the elephant bill.

I am a survivor of the 1944 Hartford circus fire where 168 people, mostly women and children, lost their lives in the 10 minutes it took for the parfin coated tent to collapse on them. I was 13 years old. There isn't a day that goes by that I don't think of that day. You may think that event soured me on circuses! No, you would be wrong.

I love animals. A couple of years ago when a bill similar to this one had been introduced and the Ringling Brothers Circus was in town at the Hartford Civic Center (Now called the XL), there was a week day when no matinee performance was scheduled. Legislators were invited to go backstage and see first hand how all the animals were treated when not performing. I was offered the opportunity to go along and did.

I found that the animal caretakers were very professional; they love the animals and treat them with great respect, keep them and their surroundings clean with the proper amount of food and water. As for the elephants, I saw how the pole which is used to keep them in line does not cause any physical harm to them. They all seem very happy. *ALSO KNOWN AS AN ANKUS*

Which bring me to the R. W. Cummerford animal farm in Goshen, Connecticut which has 3 elephants. Robert Cummerford operates a traveling petting zoo. They love these elephants, which are the only ones permanently kept in Connecticut. He has kept elephants there for over 40 years. In all of that time, they have never been sited for any cruelty to their animals; occasionally an inspector may identify a minor housekeeping mistake, like someone forgetting to return a lid to a food can.

This bill borders on harassment of that animal farm and should not be confused with the recent issue with a chimpanzee which was kept by an amateur as a household pet. The Cummerford elephants and other animals and the Circus animals are tended to by professionals with the proper facilities and training.

If this bill succeeds, Cummerford will move to an animal friendly state and take 50 job with him, and the circus will no longer come to New Haven and Hartford, causing immense loss of pleasure to the residents of Connecticut to say nothing of the untold monetary loss, if we must bring it down to that level.

I say, let's put this NON-ISSUE to bed once and for all and get back to solving the real problems of the State.